

16 March 1966

SUBJECT: Vietnam Orientation Seminar

1. The Branch has had a continuing interest in the Vietnam Orientation Seminar, and has queried most of its new arrivals as to the contents and value of the seminar. We concur rather strongly, with the Headquarters feeling that the seminar is "a worthwhile cornerstone" in the effort to indoctrinate personnel being assigned to this Station. Per request in reference, we have reviewed the contents and presentation as outlined in the attachment to reference, and have only minor recommendations to make concerning the Seminar.

2. A principal recommendation concerns the problem which, for lack of a better term, has been called "culture shock". A significant percentage of new officers at the Station have never before served in any of the so-called "underdeveloped" countries of the world, and are quite unprepared to cope with electrical power breakdowns, spending half a day or more trying to make one urgent telephone call or coping with native servant problems. New arrivals frequently have exaggerated fears of the health hazards here, and at the same time sometimes have exaggerated ideas of the "affluent living" in Saigon, making them quite ill-prepared for the often primitive and rigorous living and operating conditions in many of the Provinces. These problems and frustrations sometimes accumulate in a way that generates and focuses resentment against the Vietnamese, which can seriously reduce an officer's effectiveness. In the Station, LB/FO attempts to "inoculate" new arrivals regarding this problem, utilizing chiefly an excellent FSI paper on the subject, and also pertinent portions of the RAND Study, "The American Military Advisor and his Foreign Counterpart: The Case of Vietnam". Headquarters might desire to incorporate something along similar lines in the Orientation Seminar.

3. Field Officers who have attended the seminar unanimously endorse it. The principal criticism and recommendation that they have to make concerns reading material. Namely, there is a great variety of material available and recommended in the Orientation Seminar, but it is not available in enough copies

nor is there time available to read it. Several officers have recommended that, since the list of officers scheduled for the seminar is prepared reasonably well in advance, selected books be made available to them before the Seminar starts. As far as recommended reading material is concerned the Station particularly recommends Tanham's "Communist Revolutionary Warfare", and Hickey's "Village in Vietnam".

4. Other than the above, the Branch is extremely pleased with the Orientation Seminar and its contribution to the KUBARK effort in Vietnam.

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